

# NC MILLION ACRE INITIATIVE

## 2001 Annual Report

The NC Million Acre Initiative is a state-led, collaborative endeavor meant to accelerate the rate at which land is protected in North Carolina by fostering partnerships among private and public land protection partners, promoting more regional open space planning, and providing information about the importance of open space protection. The goal is to permanently protect a million acres of open spaces including working landscapes, historic and cultural areas, floodplains, land essential for water quality protection, natural areas, species habitat, and recreational lands.

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## ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

### **Introduction:**

During the 1998 Session of the General Assembly, lawmakers directed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to protect, through private and public actions, an additional million acres of farmland, open space, and other conservation lands across North Carolina between January 1, 1999 and December 31, 2009. This directive is found in G.S. 113A- 241 (Included in this report as an appendix).

The NC Million Acre Initiative is a state-led, collaborative endeavor meant to accelerate the rate at which land is protected in North Carolina by fostering partnerships among private and public land protection partners, promoting more regional open space planning, and providing information about the importance of open space protection. The goal is to permanently protect a million acres of open spaces including working landscapes, historic and cultural areas, floodplains, land essential for water quality protection, natural areas, species habitat, and recreational lands.

### **Goals:**

Four fundamental goals of the Million Acre Initiative have been established - One primary goal and three secondary goals that support realization of the primary goal.

- 1) PROTECT LAND - G.S. 113A-241, directs the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to lead the effort to permanently protect an additional one million acres of open space, farmland and other conservation lands by the end of 2009.
- 2) PROMOTE COLLABORATION – To facilitate efficient land protection, communication networks between land protection partners must be supported.
- 3) INCREASE REGIONAL OPEN SPACE PLANNING – Developing plans for local and regional open space protection is an important step in the process of balancing North Carolina’s development needs and conservation needs.
- 4) PROVIDE INFORMATION – The state government has a unique ability to centralize and distribute important statewide open space protection information. The state can provide a leadership role in open space protection education.

### **Which Land Counts:**

Not all protected lands in North Carolina count toward the goal of protecting an additional million acres. In order to qualify, land must be *permanently* protected through the purchase or donation of a conservation easement or fee simple interest. The easement or deed must be held by a public or private conservation oriented entity.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

September 2000 through August 2001 has been an exciting, yet challenging, 12 months for the North Carolina Million Acre Initiative. News of the Initiative and the successes of its many land protection partners has been common in the media of our state and has periodically been noted and acclaimed outside our borders as well. Support for open space protection and reaching the goal of protecting an additional million acres of open spaces remains high across the State, and the foundation for accelerated land protection in North Carolina is in place.

A look at the numbers of acres protected, though, reveals that we are not yet on course for reaching our million-acre land protection goal. There are two primary reasons for this:

- Money is the primary factor in determining the rate at which we protect land in North Carolina. While existing state trust funds meet many of the critical needs of our land protection entities, the present combined federal, state, local, and private expenditures for land protection in North Carolina will not allow the state to reach the million acre goal by 2009. It is clear that the state's budget situation makes it a difficult time to appropriate more revenues to land protection activities. It is also clear that until the land protection partners of North Carolina identify new sources of money for land protection, we will continue to fall short of the number of acres we need to protect each year.
- The Million Acre Initiative is a new program. Our initial steps in the implementation of the Million Acre Initiative have been spent developing program goals and policies, implementation strategies, standardized procedures, information systems, and many other program components that allow us to turn our desire to protect open spaces into a functioning initiative to get it done.

Over the past two years, divisions within DENR have increased their permanently protected land holdings by approximately 15.5 percent. These same entities are working together with other land protection partners to develop statewide land protection strategies and locally driven implementation plans, making sure we protect a network of lands essential for water quality and natural area protection, recreational opportunities, cultural and historic preservation, economic prosperity, and flood hazard mitigation. We are working diligently to develop a sound land protection initiative that is poised to maximize the use of additional resources when they become available.

As we continue to protect essential open spaces across the state - in big cities, small towns, and in the rural countryside - we must also address the great need for a state-led educational campaign that focuses on how permanently protected open space in every community is essential for maximizing quality of life. Helping the general public understand the ecological, economic, and social importance of protecting open space will be an important step forward in reaching North Carolina's land protection goals.

## LAND PROTECTED

### Where We Were

When the goal to protect an additional million acres of open space was announced in January 2000, no reliable calculation of the amount of open space already protected in North Carolina existed. In order to establish that baseline number, hundreds of surveys were sent out, returned, and tallied during the summer and fall of 2000. These surveys confirmed the original estimate of 2.8 million acres of existing protected land in the state.

Table 1-1 below shows the breakdown of how much land was already protected by each of the land protection sectors that hold land for conservation purposes in North Carolina

Table 1-1

<b>SECTOR</b>	<b>Acres of Land Protected as of 12/31/98</b>
Local Governments	52,282 <sup>1</sup>
State Government	529,813
Federal Government	2,066,138
Local Land Trusts	38,464
Other Conservation Organizations	73,997
<u>Total</u>	<b>2,760,694</b>

<sup>1</sup> Local Government figures are based on survey responses from 61 of 100 counties and 139 of 538 municipalities.

### Where We Are Now

Once the baseline figure was determined, a system for tracking the additional million acres was developed. Figures for state, federal, and private sector land protection partners are collected through surveys every six months (end of calendar year and end of fiscal year). The local government totals have not been updated since the baseline survey was completed during the summer of 2000. Totals for each of the sectors as of 12/31/00 are presented in table 1-2.

Table 1-2

<b>SECTOR</b>	<b>Acres Protected Between 1/1/99 and 12/31/00</b>
Local Governments	9,673 <sup>1</sup>
State Government	67,144
Federal Government	7,012
Local Land Trusts	22,738
Other Conservation Organizations	5,183
<u>Total</u>	<b>111,750</b>

<sup>1</sup> Local Government figures are from 1/99 – 6/00.

The University System of North Carolina has not been counted in these figures nor have all the land protection partners at the state level. The private data are complete, but the local government information is incomplete as some of our larger municipalities and a number of counties have never replied to the surveys that were sent to them. Since many of these local government entities have a substantial number of acres in protected status, the total number for local governments should be higher.

Based upon the figures that have been collected, however, the annual rate of land protection in North Carolina is approximately 56,000 acres per year. At this rate, it would take 18 years to complete the Million Acre Initiative. To reach the goal of one million acres in a decade's time, we must average 100,000 acres per year. Table 1-3 (on the following page) offers a better picture of which entities are protecting what quantity of land within the individual sectors. Maps of the land that has been protected so far are included later in the report in the Open Space Mapping section (starting on page 8).

**To realize the million-acre goal that was established as state law in June 2000, we must double the rate at which we are protecting land in North Carolina.**

TABLE 1-3

## Acres Under Permanent Protection

(note: a blank cell means no data was collected. 0 means no land was protected)

<b>State Agency</b>	<b>category</b>	<b>PRE 1999</b>	<b>1/99 - 6/00</b>	<b>7/00 - 12/00</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<i>DENR - FOREST RESOURCES (*)</i>	state forest	44,141	592	1,154	45,887
<i>DENR - SOIL AND WATER</i>	conservation reserve enhancement program	0	0	349	349
<i>WILDLIFE RESOURCES</i>	game lands	266,929	11,164	16,846	294,939
<i>DENR - WATER QUALITY</i>	wetlands restoration program	891	139	0	1,030
<i>DENR - PARKS AND REC.</i>	state park	80,618	8,284	5,613	94,515
	state natural area	27,169	37	278	27,484
	state rec area	12,239	0	0	12,239
	state lakes	29,135	0	0	29,135
<i>DENR - COASTAL MNGMT.</i>	coastal reserves	31,406	18,758	32	50,196
	public beach/access	28	0	0	28
	submerged lands	1,415	0	0	1,415
<i>DoA&amp;CS - PLANT INDUSTRY</i>	state nature preserve	19	158	3,740	3,917
	other lands	22,026			22,026
<i>DCR - HISTORIC SITES (**)</i>	state historic sites	1,506			1,506
<i>STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM (**)</i>	university property	12,291			12,291
<b>SUBTOTALS</b>		<b>529,813</b>	<b>39,132</b>	<b>28,012</b>	<b>596,957</b>
<b>Local Governments</b>					
ALL CITY AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS (***)	parks, greenways, watersheds, etc.	52,282	9,673		61,956
<b>SUBTOTALS</b>		<b>52,282</b>	<b>9,673</b>		<b>61,956</b>
<b>Federal Agency</b>					
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE	national wildlife refuge	419,674	1,031	111	420,817
US FOREST SERVICE	national forests	1,243,507	1,703	809	1,246,019
USDA-NRCS WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM	wetlands reserve	15,067	1,986	1,163	18,216
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	national park	387,890	209	0	388,100
<b>SUBTOTALS</b>		<b>2,066,138</b>	<b>4,929</b>	<b>2,083</b>	<b>2,073,149</b>
<b>Local Land Trusts</b>					
NC LAND TRUSTS (****)	protected lands	38,464	16,378	6,360	61,202
<b>SUBTOTALS</b>		<b>38,464</b>	<b>16,378</b>	<b>6,360</b>	<b>61,202</b>
<b>Other Conservation Groups</b>					
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY	nature preserves	57,000	4,224	382	61,606
AUDUBON SOCIETY	nature preserves	6,200	0	0	6,200
AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST	farmland	8,797	0	0	8,797
PRESERVATION NC	historic preservation	2,000	438	139	2,577
<b>SUBTOTALS</b>		<b>73,997</b>	<b>4,662</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>79,180</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>2,760,694</b>	<b>74,774</b>	<b>36,976</b>	<b>2,872,444</b>

\* Does not include Dupont State Forest

\*\* DCR: Have not responded to surveys; Universities: Have not been surveyed again

\*\*\* According to Survey Responses from 61 of 100 counties and 139 of 538 municipalities

\*\*\*\* 25 local land trusts that regularly partner with the Conservation Trust for North Carolina

## **Land Protection Highlights:**

This is a sampling of the land protection projects of 2000-2001. For each project, information on location, significance, partnerships, and funding sources is presented.

- **Boiling Spring Lakes**, Brunswick County. Protection Partners: NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (Plant Conservation Program), The Nature Conservancy (NC Chapter), Town of Boiling Spring. Significance: Nationally significant natural area, unusual concentration of endemic plant species. Funding Sources: Natural Heritage Trust Fund, NC Conservation Tax Credit Program.
- **Bullhead Mountain**, Alleghany County. Protection Partners: NC Division of Parks and Recreation, National Audubon Society, Blue Ridge Rural Land Trust, Conservation Trust for North Carolina, local residents and elected officials. Significance: Viewshed for Blue Ridge Parkway, critical hawk migration area. Funding Sources: Natural Heritage Trust Fund, NC Dept. of Transportation.
- **Emily H. Allen Wildflower Preserve**, Forsyth County. Protection Partners: Private landowner, Piedmont Land Conservancy. Significance: Home to over 500 species of wildflowers from across the southeastern United States, including 28 species of Trillium. Funding Sources: Piedmont Land Conservancy, Winston-Salem Foundation, John and Anna Hanes Foundation, NC Conservation Tax Credit Program, local and regional garden clubs, other private donations.
- **Farmland Conservation Easement**, Hyde County. Protection Partners: Private landowner, NC Division of Soil and Water Conservation (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program - CREP). Significance: Farmland important for water quality protection. Funding Sources: US Department of Agriculture-Natural Resource Conservation Service, Clean Water Management Trust Fund.
- **Gar Creek**, Mecklenburg County. Protection Partners: Mecklenburg County, Catawba Lands Conservancy. Significance: Undisturbed riparian and upland habitat for water quality protection, conservation of wildlife habitat. Funding Source: Mecklenburg County Land Preservation Bonds.
- **Lake Logan**, Haywood County. Protection Partners: NC Wildlife Resources Commission, The Conservation Fund of NC, US Forest Service, The Boy Scouts of America, Save Lake Logan Committee, The Episcopal Diocese of Western NC, elected officials, and private donors. Significance: Protection of Lake Logan and its tributaries, conservation of wildlife habitat. Funding Sources: Natural Heritage Trust Fund, Clean Water Management Trust Fund, private donor, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, Boy Scouts of America, US Forest Service, The Episcopal Diocese of Western NC.
- **Seven Mile Creek**, Orange County. Protection Partners: Orange County, Eno River Association. Significance: Undeveloped bottomlands, large roadless area, wildlife habitat, water quality protection for headwaters of the Eno River. Funding Sources: Orange County (Lands Legacy Program).
- **Working Forest Conservation Easement**, Moore County. Protection Partners: Private landowner, Sandhills Area Land Trust. Significance: Endangered species (Red-cockaded Woodpecker) habitat, water quality protection. Funding Source: Private landowner (using North Carolina Conservation Tax Credit Program).

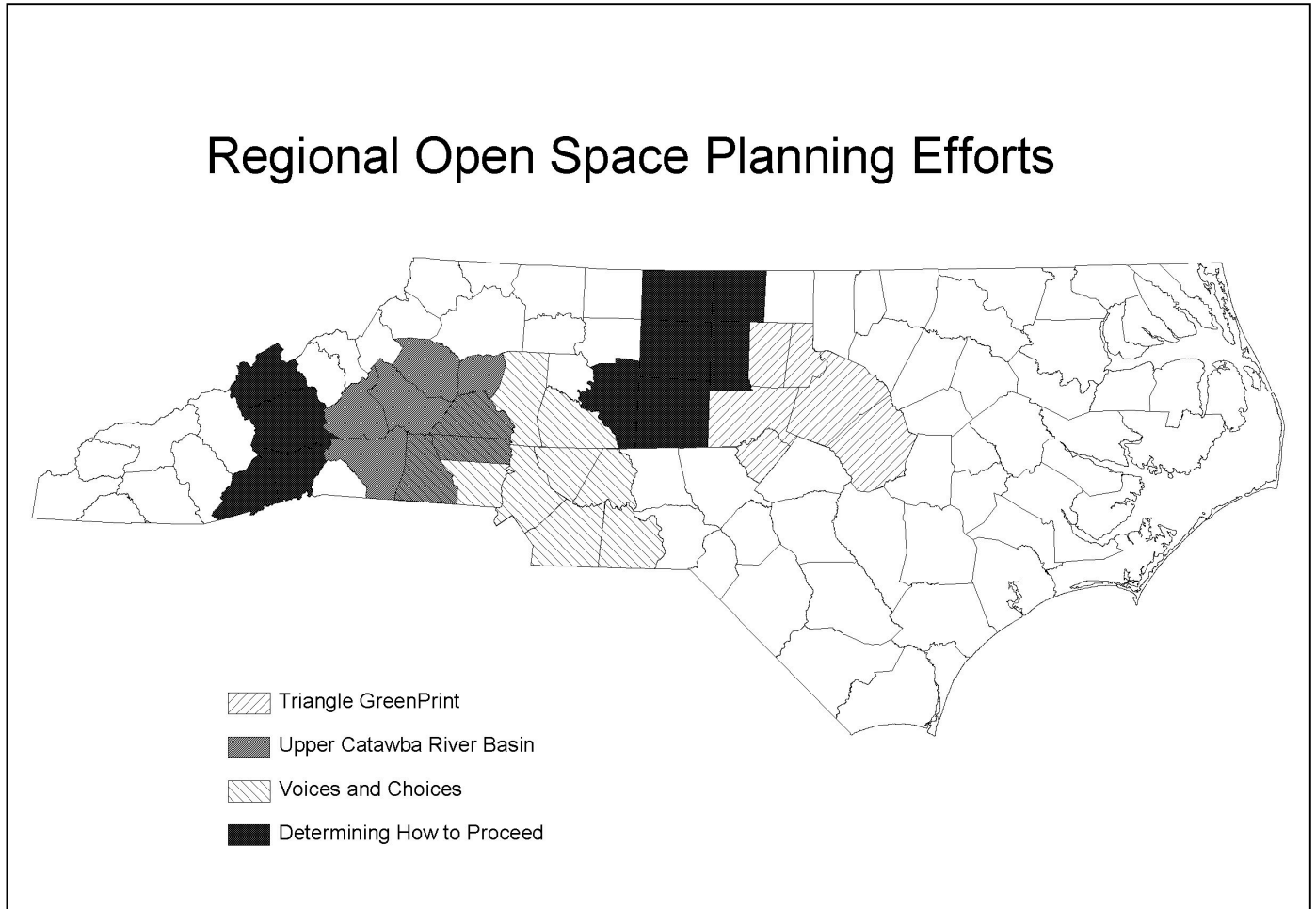


## INFORMATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

### Regional Planning Efforts

To ensure that we are protecting one million acres of important open space and not just any million acres of land, we must support local open space planning efforts. A number of these efforts are underway across the state in various different forms. The most effective planning efforts are the ones that go beyond individual local boundaries to incorporate the open space needs of an entire region. Ideally, these plans will be developed in a way that allows for blending across regions as well. The following map shows where regional open space planning efforts are either underway or being considered.

Map 2-1



Two regional planning efforts are more comprehensive than others in the state: The Charlotte Area Voices and Choices program and the Triangle Area GreenPrint. Less comprehensive projects are underway in several other communities. These are generally led by local land trusts

#### Regional Open Space Planning Efforts in North Carolina

Triangle GreenPrint – A multi-phase project to develop a commonly agreed upon plan for protecting the critical green infrastructure in the six-county Triangle area. Sponsors: Triangle Land Conservancy, Triangle J Council of Governments, NCDENR.

Voices and Choices – This is one component of their larger community visioning process for the fourteen-county Charlotte/Mecklenburg area. Driven by the Voices and Choices staff with technical support from the Carolinas Land Conservation Network and LandDesign (a private consulting firm).

Upper Catawba River Basin – This effort is being led by the Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina and is focused on protecting the natural heritage of the Upper Catawba River Basin. Community visioning workshops have been held to discuss protection targets and strategies.

Piedmont Area – Project is still being developed through leadership from the Piedmont –Triad Council of Governments and the Piedmont Land Conservancy. Their work will most likely focus on incorporating broad open space planning goals into smaller area plans.

Land of Sky – Individual interests in a common effort to develop a region-wide strategy for protecting open spaces are coming together. Key partners include the Land of Sky Council of Governments, the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy, and local elected officials.

and focus predominantly on protecting natural areas. Additionally, there are other communities that are expressing interest in creating a regional open space protection plan, but do not yet have the resource capabilities or for other reasons are not ready yet to proceed with creating a regional open space protection plan. Communications between and among the different groups is being promoted through the Million Acre Initiative.

### **Open Space Mapping**

As part of the State Budget of Fiscal Year 2000, the General Assembly allocated \$200,000 to the Center for Geographic Information and Analysis (CGIA) as part of the \$1.7 million Farmland Preservation Trust package. This money was used to develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) for storing and mapping open space protection data in North Carolina. Dozens of meetings were held to discuss the technical intricacies of establishing such a complicated spatial database. The GIS was designed to achieve two goals:

- 1) To map each protected property in North Carolina, documenting the owners, managers, funding sources, management strategies, type of protection, date of transaction, and many other important pieces of information about each land protection project.
- 2) To bring together layers of data that can be used to develop strategies for future land protection. Data layers include prime farmland, municipal boundaries, water bodies, wildlife habitat areas, and target regions of various land protection programs.

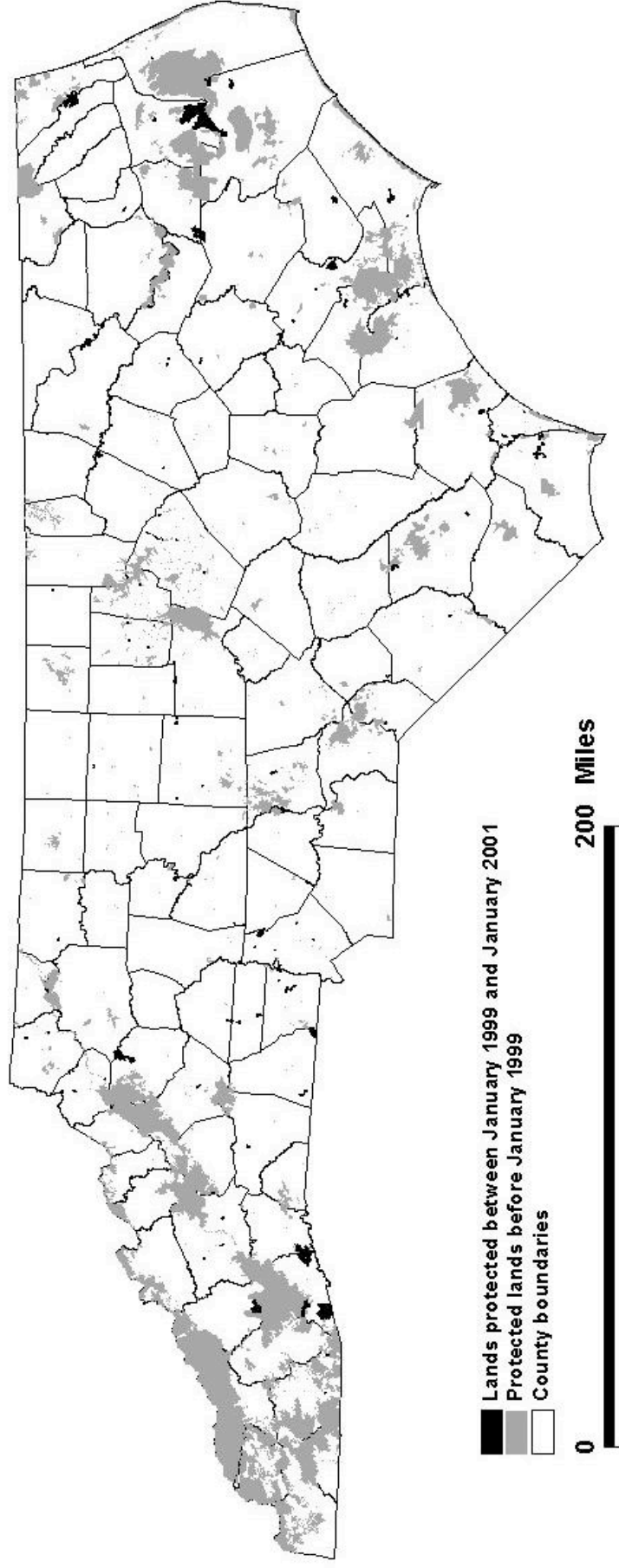
The structure of the database has been completed and the data have been partially collected. Additional data layers have been added to the protected areas layer to create a complete “project”

that is available on CD-ROM and viewable using GIS software. CGIA is handling the distribution of this product. In its present state, though, the product will not be able to serve all the functions it was designed to do. In order to be completely functional, more spatial data needs to be created and incorporated into the GIS. In North Carolina, and most other states, digital, geographic information about the land holdings of the local governments and the private non-profit land trusts is lacking. Until this information is collected, and in some cases created, the Million Acre GIS will only be partially effective. Collecting all the land protection information that is needed will take time. It will involve developing partnerships between state government, regional councils of government, local governments, and private land protection interests.

The maps on the following pages are products of CGIA's Million Acre Mapping project. The first map shows the extent of protected lands in North Carolina before the Million Acre Initiative and the open spaces that have been protected as part of the Million Acre Initiative. The second map is a larger scale focus on one portion of the map – the Wilmington area in this case - used to show detail that cannot be seen on a statewide map. The maps are being presented here only for the purpose of demonstrating some of the information available in the GIS. They are not of sufficient quality to be used for land protection analyses.

The maps present approximately 107,000 acres of the total 112,000 acres that have been identified as protected as part of the Million Acre Initiative. Some discrepancies exist at the local government level and some of the private lands that have been counted are not included in the map work. All state lands that have been counted toward the million-acre goal are shown on the maps and nearly all the federal lands are mapped as well. Corrections and updates will be made to the CGIA Million Acre GIS as more funds become available to do so. Discussions are underway to determine the best way for individual land protection partners to make updated information available to CGIA.

# Protected Lands

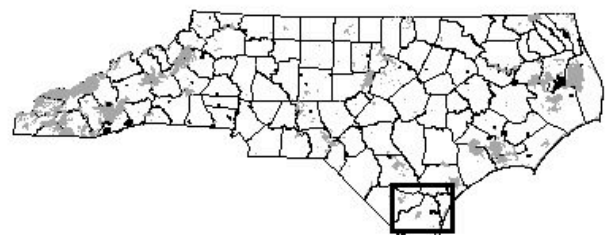


# Detail of Protected Lands Data



5 0 5 10 Miles

-  Interstate highways
- Protected lands**
-  Federal government
-  State government
-  Local government
-  Private sector
-  County boundaries



## **Website**

In October 2000, the Million Acre Initiative website was made public. By visiting <http://www.ncsparks.net/millionacre>, anyone can learn what the Million Acre Initiative is about and can access information about land protection projects, conservation easements, costs of development vs. cost of undeveloped land, land development trends, land protection incentives such as the North Carolina Conservation Tax Credit Program and other general open space protection issues. Users can also link to a number of other land protection entities in North Carolina and in other states including the federal government, state government, local government, and private sector land protection bodies.

As the initiative develops, the website will become a one-stop shop about all kinds of land protection projects in North Carolina. Links will be included to similar projects in other states, news and journal articles about the importance of open space protection, maps of open space protection efforts in North Carolina, tools for local governments and private citizens who wish to protect open spaces, funding opportunities, and technical assistance with land stewardship concerns. The site will become a central clearinghouse for information about open space protection and an essential stop for anyone interested in open space protection in our state.

## **Presentations**

As part of our program of information dissemination and technical assistance, we have taken our land protection campaign on the road. We make presentations to groups interested in open space protection. Some examples of our outreach efforts include the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Regional Environmental Summit in Charlotte, The Recreational Resources Service's statewide teleconference, and the NC Regional Council of Governments Conference on Smart Growth Principles.

In addition to these one-time events, the Million Acres staff often provides longer-term input to steering committees and advisory boards. In the fall and winter of 2000-2001, we worked with the Farm and Open Space Workgroup of the Legislative Commission on Smart Growth, Growth Management and Economic Development. Staff worked to include recommendations that are important to the realization of the state's land protection goals. The final report of the workgroup included important recommendations related to:

- Promoting regional open space planning
- Educating the residents of North Carolina about the importance of open space protection, and
- Empowering local governments to do more land protection, and
- Increasing funding levels for both running the initiative and land protection

## FUNDING

Meeting North Carolina's land protection goals requires resources for both actual land protection and for the management of the programs that facilitate land protection. Presently, this financial support comes from a number of sources including donations from private citizens and businesses, federal grants, local government expenditures, state appropriations, state tax incentives, and through the funding mechanisms of four trust funds. A great many of the acres protected were partially or fully paid for using grants from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Natural Heritage Trust Fund, Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, or the Farmland Preservation Trust Fund. The Conservation Tax Credit Program has also been instrumental in facilitating donations of open space by offering tax incentives to the donors. This program has allowed for the donation of 82,000 acres of land over its eighteen-year life. Continued support for these four trust funds and for the Conservation Tax Credit Program is essential if we are to meet the goal of protecting one million additional acres of farmland, conservation land and other open spaces.

### **Environmental Finance Center (EFC) Report**

At the request of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Environmental Finance Center at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (EFC) completed a study on the costs and funding options for the North Carolina Million Acre Initiative. This report was released in February 2001. The full report, about 75 pages long, is available on line at:

<http://www.efc.unc.edu/projects/MillionAcres/MillionAcresReportFinalColor.pdf>

### **Highlights of the EFC Report**

#### **Amount of land currently being protected:**

- At present funding levels, between 43,000 and 63,000 acres per year are being protected in ways that meet the Million Acre Mandate (G.S. § 133A-241).

#### **Costs of funding “the gap”**

- Additional costs, over and above FY 2000 funding levels, are expected to range from \$95 million per year to \$270 million per year, with a reasonable point estimate of \$125 million per year, for the next 10 years.

#### **Local fiscal impacts**

- The maximum estimated county property tax revenue loss (without considering offsetting gains in property values) from state acquisition of the entire one million acres of conservation property is \$9 million.

#### **Further research and implementation**

- The state should provide administrative funding to coordinate open space planning and tracking.
- The maximum benefits from land preservation will only occur if acquisitions are made in conjunction with some coordinated planning.

The report blends information gained from both stakeholder meetings and individual communications with people experienced in land protection in North Carolina. It was developed with data collected from state and federal agencies, local governments, nonprofit land trusts, environmental groups, business and development interests, and

academics. This collection of information was put into a model that estimated the likely amount of land that will be protected in North Carolina with present funding levels and ratios during the period of the Million Acre Initiative. Based on that estimate the authors suggest different approaches for closing and funding the "gap" between existing land protection efforts and what will be needed to accomplish the goals of the Million Acre Initiative. In their suggestions, they stress the importance of programs like the North Carolina Conservation Tax Credit Program because of its ability to leverage, "the willingness of individual property owners to receive less than full market value in exchange for the permanent protection of their property."

### **Funding Constraints and Grant Applications**

The Million Acre Initiative is facing resource constraints that limit our ability to meet the state's land protection goals. While a solid set of goals and strategies is being developed, some operational funds are necessary to put programs and projects in place. Grant money was sought in place of state money once news of the state's budget crisis was released. Two grant applications were submitted in the Winter/Spring of 2001. The first was to the Z. Smith Reynolds foundation for money to promote regional open space planning across the state and to fund the Million Acre coordinator's position for an additional year. This application for continued funding was turned down. The second grant application was to the US EPA (Surveys, Studies, Investigations, and Special Purpose Grants; CFDA 66.606) for money specifically to continue the coordinator's position. This application was approved and is being used to pay the coordinator's salary during fiscal year 2001.

Future grant applications will be submitted to help pay for education and outreach projects, to help in the gathering of open space protection data across the state, and to assist local and regional governments with their regional open space planning efforts. To meet some of the additional staff needs, an internship has been proposed for the summer of 2002 and the possibility of acquiring an Americorps volunteer is being explored.



## THE YEAR AHEAD

Accelerating the rate at which we protect land in North Carolina is essential if we are to reach our million-acre target by December 2009. While the most critical element in our rate of land protection is availability of funding, there are many other factors that also affect that rate. Embracing the following strategies will help us achieve our protection goals.

### **Proposed Strategies**

*Provide Leadership in Promoting and Assisting Regional Open Space Planning.* As mentioned earlier in the report, regional open space planning is an important part of making sure the million acres we eventually protect are the right million acres – not a piecemeal, patchwork of undeveloped lands but a system of essential greenspace whose network supports the complete functionality of each piece of land protected.

*Provide Coordination for the Initiative.* Protection of one million acres of farmland, parks, natural areas, and watersheds across North Carolina will involve the participation of many state and federal agencies, local governments, private land trusts, conservation groups, and other organizations involved with land conservation. Coordination among these many participants is needed to share ideas, to foster partnerships, to minimize duplication of effort, and to ensure that the Million Acre Initiative results in conservation of North Carolina's most environmentally important lands.

*Supply Information.* There is a great need for an organized, targeted, statewide open space education campaign. Presentations about the importance of open space protection should be delivered to business groups, civic groups, school groups, local officials and their staffs and boards. These presentations should stress the importance of open space protection from an environmental perspective, economic development perspective, and a quality of life perspective. They should be based on a consistent message and should be offered broadly throughout the state. As a supplement, the Million Acre Initiative website should be continually updated with interesting and informative links for individuals who want to know more about protecting open space in North Carolina.

## APPENDIX

### Million Acre Initiative Legislation Approved June 28, 2000

#### Article 17.

#### Conservation, Farmland, And Open Space Protection And Coordination.

##### § 113A-240. Intent.

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly to continue to support and accelerate the State's programs of land conservation and protection, to find means to assure and increase funding for these programs, to support the long-term management of conservation lands acquired by the State, and to improve the coordination, efficiency, and implementation of the various State and local land protection programs operating in North Carolina.

(b) It is the further intent of the General Assembly that the State's lands should be protected in a manner that minimizes any adverse impacts on the ability of local governments to carry out their broad mandates. (2000-23, s. 2.)

##### § 113A-241. State to Preserve One Million Acres; Annual Report.

(a) The State of North Carolina shall encourage, facilitate, plan, coordinate, and support appropriate federal, State, local, and private land protection efforts so that an additional one million acres of farmland, open space, and conservation lands in the State are permanently protected by December 31, 2009. These lands shall be protected by acquisition in fee simple or by acquisition of perpetual conservation easements by public conservation organizations or by private entities that are organized to receive and administer lands for conservation purposes.

(b) The Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources shall lead the effort to add one million acres to the State's protected lands and shall plan and coordinate with other public and private organizations and entities that are receiving and administering lands for conservation purposes.

(c) The Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources shall report to the Governor and the Environmental Review Commission annually beginning on September 1, 2000, on the State's progress towards attaining the goal established in Section 2 of this Article. (2000-23, Ss. 2, 3.)

## MILLION ACRE INITIATIVE STAFF AND CONTACTS

The Million Acre Initiative has one full-time staff member dedicated to realizing the goal of protecting one million additional acres of open spaces in a decade's time. Initial funding for the coordinator's position was secured through a one-year grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. A separate grant from the US EPA has been acquired to pay for the coordinator's position through state fiscal year 2001-2002.

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